# Enhancing UTMSU Governance, Transparency, and Inclusivity

**INTERIM REPORT**

July 27 2026

University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union
LOCAL 109 OF THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

# Enhancing UTMSU Governance, Transparency, and Inclusivity

**INTERIM REPORT**

July 27, 2026

## CONTEXT: COMPLAINT TO THE UNIVERSITY

During the 2025/2026 academic year some UTMSU members reached out to UTMSU with concerns regarding the Union's advocacy and communications with respect to Palestinian rights. The UTMSU Executive and Board responded to these concerns. Unsatisfied with the Union's answers, a few members filed a complaint with the University's Complaint and Resolution Council for Student Societies ("CRCSS").

As summarized by the CRCSS Panel, the complaint filed with the University specifically alleged failings in three areas:

1. Transparency: UTMSU did not provide adequate information about the governance and funding decisions underlying its October 7, 2025 event, titled "Honouring Our Martyrs," when requested by members.
2. Minority views: UTMSU did not adequately consider and respect the range of its members' views, including the views of minority members, in its conduct of advocacy activities in support of Palestine and in its response to concerns raised.
3. Safe environment for students: UTMSU failed to fulfill commitments in its own constitution to safeguard the individual rights of students and contribute to a university community where all students are treated equitably and can thrive.

### UTMSU's Perspective

UTMSU recognized the importance of the issues raised by its members and therefore decided to voluntarily participate in the CRCSS process.

Conversations regarding the Occupied Palestine Territories have, at times, been extremely difficult and emotionally charged. UTMSU viewed the complaint, and the opportunity to respond to it, as part of the broader and ongoing dialogue within the UTMSU community.

The Union has not always gotten every communication perfect on the first attempt. We have, however, made sustained and sincere efforts to listen, engage with, and respond respectfully to the deeply held and often conflicting views among our membership.

Discrimination on the basis of religion, country of origin, or any other protected ground has no place within UTMSU or on the UTM campus. Advocacy in support of equity and individual student safety is a core part of the Union's mandate. UTMSU has also consistently and clearly denounced antisemitism both on campus and in broader society. UTMSU recognizes that anti-sematism is at an all time high globally, and we will continue the work of ensuring our membership feels represented by their student union while upholding our policies and mandates.

At the same time, the provision of individual support and services to Union members should not require UTMSU to silence democratically driven advocacy on issues central to its mandate.

UTMSU does not exist in a vacuum. Our members' lives are directly affected by decisions and events taking place beyond the boundaries of the UTM campus. The Union regularly speaks on municipal, provincial, national, and international issues of importance to its members. It also adopts political positions and advocacy campaigns guided by its members through democratic decision-making processes. This advocacy work is a core part of UTMSU's identity and mandate.

UTMSU recognizes that its political advocacy will make some students uncomfortable. We will continue to actively work to support and expand safe spaces for all students within the Union and on campus by engaging in discussions, responding to complaints, maintaining democratic mechanisms through which dissenting views can be heard, and critically reflecting on and adjusting its activities in response to concerns.

UTMSU also welcomes further discussions with members and student groups regarding the ways the Union can collaborate to ensure support for all students on campus. It would also welcome opportunities to support all members, including those with political views that diverge from the Union, in engaging with and participating in UTMSU's democratic structures.

Fundamentally, however, a university-mediated complaint process cannot and should not stifle Union speech or dictate the political positions of an independent, democratic, student-run organization. UTMSU is an autonomous and independent democratic organization. A university campus should also remain a space for robust and, at times, uncomfortable discussion and debate.

UTMSU is committed to continuing its advocacy on issues of importance to Union membership, while also actively working to find new and effective ways to support all of our members, including those who disagree with our political positions.

## CRCSS Panel Opinion and UTMSU Follow Up

The CRCSS Panel, after reviewing all of the submissions and evidence brought forward by the complainants and the Union, issued an opinion with several recommendations for UTMSU. These recommendations, which are further detailed below, are not binding on the Union. UTMSU does, however, appreciate the opportunity to engage in ongoing dialogue and, on this particular issue and given the recommendations, has decided to take steps to implement the Panel's suggestions.

### CRCSS Panel comments regarding jurisdiction

In the course of its opinion, the Panel commented on the extent of the CRCSS' jurisdiction:

> Because our jurisdiction is narrow, several of the questions raised in this complaint fall outside what we are authorized to decide.
>
> We cannot decide whether anti-Zionism is, or is not, antisemitism. That question turns on contested definitions and on academic and political debate beyond our mandate. We cannot decide whether the University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union (UTMSU)'s political position on Israel and Palestine is right or wrong. Student unions are autonomous organizations entitled to take political positions through their democratic processes.
>
> …
>
> We cannot order UTMSU to adopt a particular definition of antisemitism, to use a particular training provider, to consult with a particular external organization, or to issue an apology with prescribed wording. Those would be infringements on UTMSU's autonomy and freedom of expression that the *Policy* does not authorize us to recommend.

The Panel also confirmed that several remedies originally requested – including antisemitism training delivered by named providers, mandated consultation with named external bodies, a public apology with prescribed content, and the creation of a university-administered alternative complaint pathway – were also outside of the scope of what a CRCSS Panel could recommend.

## CRCSS recommendations and UTMSU follow up

At this point in time, UTMSU is reporting on its response to the first and last CRCSS Panel recommendations. The Union's response to the remaining recommendations, all of which are reproduced below, will be summarized in a final report.

### Recommendation #1:

Within thirty business days of the Vice-President and Provost's decision, UTMSU should disclose, in writing to its members and to the Vice-President and Provost, the full financial record of the October 7, 2025, "Honouring Our Martyrs" event: the budget line under which it was funded, the total amount allocated, and the categories of expenditure.

> *UTMSU's funding for the 2025 Honoring Our Martyrs event was allocated from line item 8.20, Campaigns and Advocacy Commission. A total amount of $900 was used for a stage rental.*

### Recommendation #2:

Within ninety business days, UTMSU should adopt and publish written procedures for member complaint-handling that include, at minimum: a defined timeline for acknowledgement of receipt of any complaint; a defined timeline for substantive response; an obligation to indicate what review process was applied (including whether the complaint was treated under Article 13 of the Bylaws); a process for making a complaint about the society itself; and a channel through which members who do not feel safe engaging through ordinary means can raise concerns.

> *Follow up on this recommendation will be included in a final report.*

### Recommendation #3:

Within ninety business days, UTMSU should adopt and publish criteria for when and how it consults affected member groups before sponsoring or co-sponsoring events with foreseeable identity-based impact on a defined subset of its membership. The content of the criteria is for UTMSU to develop.

*Follow up on this recommendation will be included in a final report.*

## Recommendation #4:

Within ninety business days, UTMSU should complete the review of its Equity Handbook (or successor document) and publish the result, accompanied by a brief written explanation of the changes made and the consultation process used. The Panel does not direct what the document should say. It directs that the process be transparent and include consultation with affected members.

*Follow up on this recommendation will be included in a final report.*

## Recommendation #5:

UTMSU should report in writing to the Vice-President and Provost on implementation of each of the four directions above, within the timelines specified, with the report copied to the complainants and made publicly available to UTMSU members.

*UTMSU will publish this and future reports on its website, and will provide the suggested notifications to the Vice-President, Provost and complainants.*